



**NEW YORK STATE  
ASSOCIATION  
OF COUNTY  
HEALTH OFFICIALS**

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Division of Dockets Management  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docket No. 2005N-0345

October 17, 2005

Dear Acting Commissioner von Eschenbach,

The New York State Association of County Health Official ( NYSACHO) is writing to express disappointment at the FDA's refusal to expand access to emergency contraception (also known as the morning- after-pill) by making it available over-the-counter. Clear medical evidence and the advice of countless experts had left no dispute that emergency Contraception (EC) is an effective method of pregnancy prevention, safe enough for use by all women without a prescription.

According to CDC, in 1994 approximately one half of pregnancies in the United States were unintended (Henshaw 1998, Family Planning Perspectives) and half of those end in abortion. EC is an effective way to prevent unintended pregnancy after unprotected sex or contraceptive failure. Widespread use could prevent many unintended pregnancies each year including many that now end in abortion. If taken within 72 hours of intercourse, EC can reduce the risk of pregnancy by as much as 89 percent and efficacy is greatest if the drug is taken in 24 hours. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) noted that the need to obtain a prescription from a doctor is one of the biggest barriers to EC use.

NYSACHO believes it is in the best interest of the public's health to approve over the counter emergency contraception.

Sincerely,

Carol Ryan  
President

Cc: Senator Hillary Clinton  
Senator Charles Schumer

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